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APPLICATION NO.	FILED DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/000,366	01/28/1998	MASAHIKO HOASHI	HOASHI-2	5189
1444	7590	08/23/2004	EXAMINER	
BROWDY AND NEIMARK, P.L.L.C. 624 NINTH STREET, NW SUITE 300 WASHINGTON, DC 20001-5303			BECKER, DREW E	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1761	

DATE MAILED: 08/23/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/000,366	HOASHI ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Drew E Becker	1761	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 July 2004.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1 and 3-14 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1 and 3-14 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 3-6, and 10-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over CA 1213170A in view of Vitkovsky [Pat. No. 4,687,672].
CA 1213170A teaches a method for thawing a frozen ground meat mass by freezing the ground meat at -40°C (page 14, line 21), comminuting the frozen meat in two steps (page 15, lines 4-20), thawing with elevated temperature and without mashing or additives (page 16, lines 15-25), and comminuting to a size of 0.125-0.75" or 3-19 mm (page 6, lines 11-12). CA 1213170A does not specifically recite fish or milling at less than -15°C. Vitkovsky teaches a method of milling frozen minced fish (column 9, line 3) to a size of 5-12 mm (column 5, line 13) by freezing it to a temperature of 0 to -196°C (column 6, line 23) and then milling the frozen minced fish (Figure 1, 10 & 35). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use fish as the meat source of CA 1213170A, in view of Vitkovsky, since both are directed to methods of milling frozen meats, since CA 1213170A already teaches using "other edible animal flesh" (page 6, line 8), since fish meat is edible animal flesh, and since Vitkovsky teaches that minced fish was commonly frozen and milled. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the milling temperature of Vitkovsky into the invention of CA

1213170A since both are directed to methods of milling frozen meat, since CA 1213170A already included freezing at -40°C (page 14, line 21), and since Vitkovsky teaches that milling at low temperatures causes the food to become frangible and thus more easily milled (column 1, lines 55-60).

3. Claims 7 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over CA 1213170A in view of Vitkovsky as applied above, and further in view of Katoh et al [Pat. No. 4,950,494].

CA 1213170A and Vitkovsky teach the above mentioned concepts. CA 1213170A and Vitkovsky do not teach using a pin mixer to stir in additives such as seasoning, starch, sugar, or polyphosphate. Katoh et al teach a method of processing fish paste by mixing in seasoning and starch (column 7, line 5) by using a pin mixer (Figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the mixing of Katoh et al into the invention of CA 1213170A, in view of Vitkovsky, since all are directed to methods of processing ground meat, since Vitkovsky already included fish meat, since additives were commonly known to enhance flavor and other food properties, and since pin mixers were commonly used to add ingredients to ground meat as shown by Katoh et al.

4. Claims 8-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katoh et al in view of CA 1213170A, Vitkovsky, and JP 06133739A. Katoh et al teach a method of producing kamaboko by molding thawed, ground fish paste (column 6, lines 42-51) and heating the molded fish in two steps to induce gelling (column 6, lines 53-64). Katoh et al do not teach milling frozen, ground fish meat at less

than -15°C or heating with electricity. CA 1213170A teaches a method for thawing frozen ground meat by milling the frozen meat (page 15, lines 4-20), a temperature of -40°C (page 14, line 21), and thawing with elevated temperature (page 16, lines 15-25). Vitkovsky teaches a method of milling frozen minced fish (column 9, line 3) to a size of 5-12 mm (column 5, line 13) by freezing it to a temperature of 0 to -196°C (column 6, line 23) and then milling the frozen minced fish (Figure 1, 10 & 35). JP 06133739A teaches a method of producing molded fish paste products by heating with electricity (abstract). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the milling of CA 1213170A into the invention of Katoh et al since both are directed to producing ground meat products, since Katoh et al already teaches thawing (column 7, line 1), and since milling prior to thawing would result in reduced thawing time due to the reduction in surface area in relation to volume as taught by CA 1213170A (page 6, lines 13-20). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the milling temperature of Vitkovsky into the invention of Katoh et al, in view of CA 1213170A, since all are directed to methods of processing meat, since CA 1213170A already included freezing at -40°C (page 14, line 21), and since Vitkovsky teaches that milling at low temperatures causes the food to become frangible and thus more easily milled (column 1, lines 55-60). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the electric thawing of JP 06133739A into the invention of Katoh et al since both are directed to the processing of fish paste products, since Katoh et al already includes heating, and since electric heating was commonly known and used for fish paste products as shown by JP 06133739A.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed July 22, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that CA 1213170A does not teach a "meat mass". However, CA 1213170A clearly discloses a thawing a "meat mass" (page 16, lines 19-21).

Applicant argues that CA 1213170A does not teach a uniform particle size. However, while CA 1213170A recites an irregular shape, it also teaches a uniform particle size (page 6, lines 11-12).

In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

Applicant argues that Vitovsky also does not teach "uniform" particles. However, Vitovsky clearly discloses uniform particles which are uniform and equal in size to the aperture they pass through (column 5, line 15).

Applicant appears to be interpreting the limitation "uniform particle size" in claim 1 to mean that each particle must be of exact equal size. However, claim 1 does not recite "exact equal size".

Applicant argues that CA 1213170A does not teach "thawing without shearing". However, CA 1213170A specifically recites "spreading of a single layer of particles of

the meat product 58 onto a tray or plate at a normal ambient temperature in the range of 72 F to 80 F will result in complete thawing of the product particles" (page 16, lines 19-21).

In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, CA 1213170A is directed to a method of thawing frozen ground meat, and Vitkovsky is directed to a method of milling frozen minced fish. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of CA 1213170A and Vitkovsky since CA 1213170A already teaches using "other edible animal flesh" (page 6, line 8), since fish meat is edible animal flesh, and since Vitkovsky teaches that minced fish was commonly frozen and milled; since CA 1213170A already included freezing at -40 C (page 14, line 21), and since Vitkovsky teaches that milling at low temperatures causes the food to become frangible and thus more easily milled (column 1, lines 55-60).

Conclusion

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Drew E Becker whose telephone number is 571-272-1396. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Thur. 8am-5pm and every other Fri. 8am-4pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Milton Cano can be reached on 571-272-1398. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Drew E Becker
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1761

8-19-04